

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/774,113

Applicant(s)

BLANCHET ET AL

Examiner

Susy N. Tsang-Foster

Art Unit

1745

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment filed on 4/8/2005.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-10.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 5/14/2004 and 2/6/2004 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying Indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

SUSYTSANG-FOSTER
PRIMARY EXAMINER



EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with John Torrente on 6/20/2005.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 3:

3. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell system in accordance with claim 1, wherein
said fuel cell system further comprises a heater; and
said coupling assembly receives a supply fuel, segments said supply fuel into
said first and second fuel supply portions and carries said ~~second~~ first fuel supply portion
through said heater prior to said ~~second~~ first fuel supply portion being coupled to said one or
more indirect internal reforming passages.

2. Reason for amendment:

The amendment above is to correct the error in referencing the first fuel supply portion as the second fuel supply portion in light of the figures and the specification.

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3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art of record, Matsumura et al. (US Patent No. 4,647,516) does not disclose, teach, or suggest selective and adjustable controlling of the fuel supply portion to the direct internally reforming region of the fuel cell assembly. Instead, Matsumura et al. disclose dividing the fuel supply into two parts, one of which is fed into the first reforming region (the indirect reforming region) and is reformed and the remainder of the fuel gas externally supplied and the part of the fuel gas reformed in the first reforming region are joined and then fed into the second reforming region, which is the direct internally reforming region (col. 5, lines 15-35). Matsumura also discloses controlling the amount of decomposition of the hydrocarbons or alcohols in the indirect internally reforming region (col. 5, lines 25-30). However, there is no motivation or suggestion in Matsumura or in the prior art to selectively adjust the remainder part of fuel supply portion that is fed into the second direct internally reforming region. The previous art rejections based on Baker et al. (US Patent No. 4,182,795) are withdrawn because the Examiner agrees with the applicant that the reference does not disclose direct internally reforming regions in the fuel cell assembly.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

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4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications should be directed to examiner Susy Tsang-Foster whose telephone number is (571) 272-1293. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached at (571) 272-1292.

The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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SUSY TSANG-FOSTER
PRIMARY EXAMINER